

3 April 1957

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

COMMENTS by the Inter-Office Telecommunications  
Advisory Committee on Technical Aspects of the  
1956 "Schramm" Report

The following comments are related to specific recommendations of the Conference Chairman. Comments are also included concerning the information on page 14 of the subject report regarding distribution of broadcast receivers.

Recommendation 2

The program of peripheral monitoring, efficiently organized, and well coordinated by OSI, should be continued.

Comment: Peripheral monitoring should be continued; however, the program should be subject to review by the responsible organizations to see whether it is possible to improve its effectiveness and efficiency.

Recommendation 3

However, first priority in our monitoring plans for this year should be given to building an adequate program of technical monitoring within the Orbit countries. Without this, we shall never be able to tell exactly what ground-wave jamming is doing to our signals, and we shall never know precisely how to interpret the results of our peripheral monitoring. Therefore, it is strongly recommended:

- a. That a technically qualified person be added to our Mission staffs

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individual be responsible primarily for the Monitoring activities of the Mission; that he should not himself do all the monitoring, but that he should be responsible for scheduling the monitoring time of other officers, for instructing them, for keeping and transmitting the records of monitoring, and for maintaining and calibrating the equipment; and that, given his impetus, the monitoring should be extended as widely as possible throughout the country and correlated with the peripheral monitoring. I am sympathetic with the problem of the Missions in spreading their staffs over many duties -- the information they are asked to collect, the appearances they are required to make, the services they are asked to perform for travelers and official visitors. Our broadcasts are one of our chief arms of contact with the Orbit during this critical period. The duty of checking on them is not something that should be added, almost as an afterthought and on an occasional and sporadic basis, to the duties of an officer already burdened by other assignments and technically unqualified for the job. The assignments of priorities to our activities would seem to argue that at least one person in such a large Embassy [redacted] might well be assigned primarily to monitoring, even at cost to such activities as service to tourists and official visitors. The amount of money we are spending on broadcasts to the Orbit, the degree of national prestige and interest we are staking on these broadcasts, demand that we find out to our own satisfaction where and how they are receivable.

b. However, if it proves impossible to add such a technically qualified person permanently to the Mission staffs, then it is strongly recommended that a technically qualified person be added on a three-months basis, and that during that time in each country he supervise a program of monitoring that can be correlated with peripheral monitoring, so that when this exercise is completed we shall have some basis for projecting our peripheral results.

Comment: Requirements for technicians in Embassies for broadcast intelligibility monitoring were prepared in August 1956 and supplied to the working group developing the general requirements.

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Currently, the report of this working group is near the point of final approval and submission to the Department of State for implementation as feasible. It is not now clear how long it will be before a technician is actually on the job, but in view of still unsolved problems of staffing patterns and recruitment, it will undoubtedly take a considerable time. The working group paper retains the broadcasting requirements virtually as originally drafted. They are substantially in accordance with Mr. Schramm's recommendation 3.a., quoted above.

The TDY assignment of technicians, as recommended in 3.b., has much merit. Arrangements are currently being cleared for USIA to lend a technician to [REDACTED] However, it

25X1A6a seems likely that such TDY assignments in other capitals (where local jamming is still a major problem) would be most useful in conjunction with the inauguration of a program on monitoring by various members of the Embassy staff, particularly at places away from the Embassy building. Annex A of the subject report is a draft of such a plan which was discussed at the 1956 meeting at

25X1A6a [REDACTED] (see page 38 of subject report). At that time, the opinion of the meeting was that expansion of monitoring by lay members of the Embassy staff "was second-best to the desirability of assigning a technically-qualified person to each mission to do the monitoring." However, since a limited amount of monitoring will suffice in cities subjected to heavy local jamming [REDACTED]

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and since the freedom to travel of any one individual in these Embassies is restricted, it seems necessary to obtain cooperation of all travellers from the Embassy for an effective operation. The draft plan of Annex A provided (in paragraph 4.3) that guidance would be furnished to Embassy personnel by technicians assigned on TDY. CIA is currently reviewing the draft plan with the Department of State in an effort to accomplish an expanded program of intelligibility monitoring in the Embassies along these lines. Mr. Schramm's recommendation 3.b. will then fit in with this program. This action should be taken now in view of the probable further delays in implementing recommendation 3.a. At such time as the latter is implemented and a technician is permanently assigned, he can serve as guide and coordinator of all intelligibility monitoring by Embassy personnel.

Recommendation 4

Our broadcast engineers engaged in the monitoring program would do well to educate the policy and program people among the broadcasters in the meaning and interpretation of the monitoring reports, the terms used, and the measures employed. There was something less than complete understanding of these at [redacted]

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Comment: The problem of expressing a complex technical situation in words that "he who runs may read" is well known. Unfortunately, the broadcasting situation is complex and there is no apparent easy solution; at least the engineers have not yet found a method of interpreting monitoring reports which does not require a certain effort on the part of the non-technical policy

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and program people to understand. It is believed that the problem will be solved only to the extent that patience and effort are demonstrated on the part of both the engineers and the readers of their reports.

Recommendation 5

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The broadcasters should develop and make clear their monitoring requirements to the Missions. [REDACTED] it became apparent that far too little guidance had been given.

Comment: Intelligibility monitoring guidance has been furnished to the Embassies from time to time, usually through USIA channels. Currently developing plans to put intelligibility monitoring by the staff of the Embassies on a more regular basis will, when effected, serve to clarify what is desired from each post. This plan includes the provision of a technician on TDY at each post to brief the personnel on technical aspects of the problem.

Recommendation 6

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It is imperative that Radio Liberation should be given stronger and more efficiently located transmitting facilities if it is to carry an important share of our broadcasting to the Soviet Union. [REDACTED] it became apparent that the jammers had caught up with this station, and that its comparatively weak signal had seriously deteriorated.

Comment: Indications are that this conclusion about RLN reception is correct.

Recommendation 18

The increased flow of travel back and forth between the Orbit and the West should be used as fully as possible to gather additional information on audience. In

particular, our traveling specialists, who have close and usually friendly relations with their opposite numbers in the Orbit, should be alert to evidence of this kind.

Comment: Any increase in the amount of information on audience by this means will be of direct value to the assessment of technical effectiveness. Improvement in the quality and quantity of target area information on intelligibility, presently still derived from comparatively few reports, is urgently needed. Some efforts have been made to brief legal travellers as to requirements for information on reception of broadcasts, but it seems certain that many opportunities are missed. CIA with USIA should seek means for increasing this kind of reporting.

Recommendation 22

The making of a joint questionnaire to represent the needs of all three broadcasters in talking to refugees soon after they arrive, is an encouraging development. This questionnaire should be used more widely, and it should be revised as necessary by the broadcasters.

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Comment: Since [redacted] meeting, a standard questionnaire for refugee interrogators on technical reception of broadcasts was put into use at various points in Europe. Currently, OSI is having printed up a supply of these, somewhat revised to simplify its usage, and has devised a modification for use in the Far East. It is hoped that general distribution of these questionnaires will (1) increase the amount and quality of the reporting and (2) facilitate the analysis of the reports. It can be used in conjunction with questionnaires on impact.

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Recommendation 23

The machinery for circulation of reports from travelers to and from the Orbit is creaking. Reports are apparently circulating late and not reaching as far as they should. A late report of this kind is much less useful to a broadcaster than a prompt one. The machinery should be oiled.

Comment: This problem applies to some extent to technical information for OSI. Routine monitor reports reach OSI promptly. Other kinds of reports may or may not arrive promptly. It is hoped that more general use of the new interrogation form, which will have the mailing address on its face, will decrease the number of delayed reports of this sort.

Recommendation 24

The peripheral reporting officers report that they have received few and infrequent requirements from the broadcasters. Obviously, if the broadcasters want useful questions asked they should furnish the peripheral officers with a clear and full list of their requirements, and review the list at six month intervals.

Comment: It is presumed that this refers primarily to climate and impact questions. The standard questionnaire on technical effectiveness mentioned in the comment on Recommendation 22 has been distributed to PRO's in Europe. It is anticipated that they will be used in conjunction with any questionnaires on audience and impact.

Recommendation 26

Assessment of effectiveness should be a continuing activity, not limited to a yearly conference. RFE has established an audience research unit for this purpose, RL has begun to build such a unit, and IRI (for VOA) has made one study of VOA's effectiveness in Poland.

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IRI should be encouraged to expand its studies to other countries and run them on a continuing basis. If this were done, it would mean that each of the broadcasters would be gathering data on its own performance, and the annual conferences would gather new meaning and efficiency. But yet the question needs to be raised whether, in addition to whatever the broadcasters themselves may do in this respect, there is not need for a continuing national assessment of effectiveness. The broadcasters necessarily look at the evidence from their own viewpoints, and cast the interpretation in their own context. Would it not be desirable to have a unit studying and evaluating our broadcast performance as a whole, and beyond the level where anyone might suspect self-pleading? This has been suggested before, but the present may be a good time to reinstitute the idea. It could be accomplished by a unit operating:

- (a) in the Department of State,
- (b) in OCB, using the mechanism of the working group, or
- (c) in a university, operating under contract.

In any case, it would be necessary to appoint a liaison man from each of the broadcasters, in order to insure a flow into the unit of all the relevant products of the broadcasters' own research. Similarly, there should be an automatic channel to bring appropriate materials from OIR, IRI, CIA, military intelligence, et cetera. The unit need not be large; if it were in a university, it might be mostly part-time people, experts on countries or on international broadcasting. In any case, this is something which the appropriate agencies should seriously consider. Do we not owe it to ourselves to look into this kind of mirror?

Comment: Implementation of this recommendation, by one or the other of the suggested mechanisms, is highly desirable because it could provide a means for correlating estimates of technical effectiveness with assessment of audience impact, and thus could provide the broadcasters, and the government as a whole, with

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reasoned judgement as to the results which are being obtained from the broadcast effort. In the absence of such a mechanism as proposed, full use is not being made of the efforts being put into evaluation either of technical effectiveness or audience impact.

Any such impact evaluation unit as proposed should have close liaison with the technical evaluation mechanism in OSI in order to

- (a) keep it advised of current analysis of technical effectiveness
- (b) provide the mechanism with collateral and confirming information on technical effectiveness deriving from indications of program effectiveness.

With respect to the summary of information on broadcast receivers in the target areas (page 14 of the subject report), the following is noted:

In general, the statistics presented in the "Schramm" report agree with the current estimates for broadcast reception facilities in the Soviet Bloc. The differences are minor and in all cases the figures cited in the "Schramm" report are equal to or slightly higher than CIA estimates. However, in all cases but one the difference may be entirely due to differences in dates rather than differences in actual magnitudes.

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25X1A6a The statement in the "Schramm" report concerning the lack of interest in developing wired radio facilities [REDACTED]

25X1A6a [REDACTED] is in accord with CIA estimates for these countries

25X1A6a except [REDACTED] CIA estimates of the development of wired radio

25X1A6a [REDACTED] do not indicate a decreased interest in wired radio as compared with radio broadcast receivers but rather an equal degree of interest in both.

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